

VISITOR GUIDE

The Special Commitment Center
Pierce County, Washington
Henry Richards, PhD, Superintendent
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Contents of this document were accurate at the time of publication.
Please contact the SCC Visiting Supervisor if you have any special questions or desire further information
about applications or arrangements for a visit.
SCC Policy 220, *Resident Personal Visiting* governs all contents of this document.

WELCOME

Our Mission

The Special Commitment Center (SCC) provides comprehensive, rehabilitative therapy to civilly committed sex offenders in a constitutionally sound environment that protects the safety and welfare of the public, staff and residents.

The SCC also receives persons who are court-assigned to the custody of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for evaluation under RCW 71.09.

Visiting

We encourage residents to visit family and friends. Maintaining close, healthy, supportive relationships is an important support to progress in the treatment program and can smooth the way when a resident is nearing possible transition into the community following successful treatment.

The SCC is a secure facility. This is a unique evaluation and treatment program for sexually violent predators. We carefully oversee our visiting program to insure your safety and the safety of the citizens of the surrounding community.

Where We Are

The SCC, operated by the Department of Social & Health Services and located on the North side of McNeil Island. McNeil Island lies near the town of Steilacoom, about 13 miles southwest of Tacoma, Washington.

Transportation to the Island

Visitors are provided free transportation by bus from the Western State Hospital grounds to the Steilacoom dock and by boat to McNeil Island. Visitors must take the bus to and from the dock. The state-operated boat is the only regular access to the island. The boat ride is about twenty minutes. From the island dock you will be provided transportation to the SCC Facility by SCC Bus.

If you have a mobility handicap or medical condition, special arrangements must be made.

How to Apply to Visit

When you contact us, we will send you a Visitor Application form, which you must complete **accurately and entirely**, providing all requested information and documents. **Once we receive your application, we will respond in 15 to 20 days.**

Visitors must be approved prior to visiting.

- A visitor is approved only to visit one SCC resident.
- A resident may have twenty approved visitors on his or her approved list. The Residential Care Manager may approve or deny additional names on an individual basis (refer to policy 220, *Personal Visiting*).
- Visitors must have a “clear” report of criminal history.

We conduct checks through:

- ✓ The National Crime Information Center (NCIC)
- ✓ The Washington State Crime Information Center
- ✓ Other agencies and resources, as appropriate.

If you have a disability, complete the appropriate section. ***Be sure to include the required documentation.*** Your application must be made early (see details below) and you may be limited to certain visiting days to meet your transportation needs.

If you are applying for a minor (a person under eighteen), you must complete the application and provide an official copy of the birth certificate. If the minor is adopted or you are the child’s guardian, you must supply the paperwork required with the application (see instructions on the form).

The SCC Superintendent, Clinical Director, and Residential Care Manager have the authority to approve or reject a visitor’s application.

Special visits are only for exceptional situations (emergencies, out-of-state or country visitors, for example) and only for persons who have applied for and been approved to visit the named resident.

Arranging Your Visits

When you are notified that your application has been approved, you may contact the resident you wish to visit. The resident is responsible to coordinate the visit.

If you have special concerns or questions, please call the Visiting Supervisor:

(253) 588-5281 ext. 1872 or ext. 1863

Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Leave a message if the Visiting Supervisor is not available.

Be prepared to tell:

1. Your name,
2. The name of the resident you will be visiting,
3. The day and scheduled time you wish to visit (see schedules), and
4. The names and ages of approved minor children who will be coming with you.

The Numbers

- A resident may have no more than **four** visitors at any single visit.
- **Not counted** in this limit are:
 - An authorized aide who is not also a personal visitor (see below)
 - A child under three, carried by a visitor.*Aides and minor children must be **pre-approved**.*

Children and Young People Who Visit

(Visitors who are minors)

A visiting minor must be:

1. A member of the resident's immediate family.
2. Approved through a separate application, to include **certified copies** of:
 - The birth certificate
 - A court order establishing legal adoption or guardianship (if applicable).
3. Approved by the Superintendent or designee.
4. If under age three, listed with the parent or guardian who is an authorized visitor.

Minors must be accompanied by an approved adult during their visit.

What if I'm Physically Challenged?

Persons with a disability who need special accommodations (equipment, an aide, special transportation) must provide **written medical verification** of the need.

The **medical verification** must say what the need is and whether the need is temporary or permanent.

- If temporary, the verification letter must state the **beginning and end dates** of the need (*for example*, "Crutches post surgery beginning August 15, 2005, ending September 30, 2005").
- If the need is continuing, the person must **reapply every twelve months**.

The person providing the verification must be a **licensed medical professional** who is treating the applicant.

If you require an aide, the aide must also be an approved visitor. If the person is acting only as your personal aide (is not the resident's visitor), your aide will not be counted against the resident's total visitors.

The superintendent must approve requested **special adaptive equipment** (electrical devices, electric wheelchairs, oxygen, etc.) before the visit is allowed.

Arranging a Visit If You're Physically Challenged

Once approved to visit, and once any special equipment has been pre-approved, you should call the SCC Visiting Supervisor at (253) 588-5281, ext. 1872 or ext. 1863, between Monday and Friday, 7:00 am to 3:00 pm. **Call at least 72 hours before your planned visit.** Leave a message if the Visiting Supervisor is not available.

Be prepared to tell:

1. Your name,
2. The name of the resident you will be visiting,
3. The day you wish to visit (see schedules),
4. Any the kind of special equipment for which you have been approved,
5. The name of your personal aide (if needed),
6. The names and ages of approved minor children who will be coming with you.

ADA Van Transportation

The SCC has a specially equipped, handicap-accessible van for the use of disabled persons. The van is operated only on certain days and times and must be scheduled in advance. Because of limited seating, the first to apply will have priority. If you must cancel your visit, please call the Visiting Supervisor. Perhaps there will be time for someone else to be contacted and use that seat.

How Do I Get There?

To Get to the Western State Hospital depot parking lot...

By Bus:

Pierce County Transit Line buses have southbound loading zones on Pacific Avenue in downtown Tacoma.

1. Take the bus to the corner of Steilacoom Boulevard SW and Far West Drive. This will place you at the west end of Western State Hospital grounds across from the Chevron Market/gas station.
2. Walk inside the fence north along Sentinel, heading toward the parking lot behind the baseball/soccer fields.
3. At the parking lot, turn right on Settler (east) to the bus depot.

By Car:

From the NORTH on I-5

1. Heading south, drive past the Tacoma Dome and Tacoma Mall turn right at the next exit, (exit 129/74th Street).
2. At the light at the end of the exit ramp, turn right (west) onto 74th Street.
3. You will cross South Tacoma Way, Lakewood Blvd & Orchard, and Bridgeport Way. NOTE: After two miles, 74th Street changes name to Custer Road SW.
4. Turn right onto 88th Street SW, 88th changes name to Steilacoom Boulevard SW.
5. Follow Steilacoom Boulevard SW past Western State Hospital.
6. At the first stop past WSH, turn right at the Chevron (gas) Market onto Sentinel.
7. Go down Sentinel to a gate on your right (Steilacoom High is on your left).
8. Turn right into the gate, Settler St., then left into the WSH bus depot parking lot.
9. Park in any un-reserved spot. Do not use parking marked MICC STAFF ONLY.
10. Walk to the bus depot at the far end of the lot. The depot is white with blue trim.
11. Enter the depot and register. ***You will not be allowed to board the bus unless you have processed in.***

From the SOUTH on I-5

1. Driving north, take exit 119 (Steilacoom-Dupont Road/Fort Lewis exit.).
2. At the light at the end of the off-ramp, turn left over the freeway.
3. At the "T" intersection, turn right.
4. Follow this road, which will take you to Steilacoom.
5. In Steilacoom, turn right on Rainier.
6. Rainier winds, making a sharp right and a sharp left, changing names and becoming Steilacoom Boulevard, which continues up hill to a lighted intersection with an Chevron Market/gas station on the left corner.
7. At the intersection, make a left turn onto Sentinel.
8. Proceed down Sentinel to the gate on your right, Settler St. (you will see Steilacoom High School on your left).
9. Turn right into the gate and then left into the WSH bus depot parking lot.
10. Park in any un-reserved spot. Do not use parking marked MICC STAFF ONLY.
11. Walk to the bus depot at the far end of the lot. The depot is white with blue trim.
12. Enter the depot and register. ***You will not be allowed to board the bus unless you have processed in.***

Rules About Safety and Security

All visitors are subject to safety and security measures.

- Persons under age 18 are not allowed into the facility without the written consent of a parent or guardian. If under 16, a visitor must be accompanied during the entire visit by a parent or guardian and must provide an original or certified copy of the birth certificate on or before their first visit.
- Intoxicants, narcotics, dangerous drugs, firearms, explosives, and other weapons are prohibited.
- If a visitor is suspected of concealing or bringing an item into the facility without approval, the visitor is subject to a pat search.
- Suspicion of **criminal activity** may result in other searches and possible reporting to law enforcement officials.

You Are Subject to Search

For safety, SCC and Department of Corrections staff routinely search visitors.

Before your first visit you must sign the “Acknowledgement of Visitor Search Requirements” form.

Visitors pass through an electronic scanner before proceeding to the visiting area.

Visitors with pacemakers must notify the visiting staff upon arrival at the Steilacoom dock and before being processed through the scanner.

Electronic searches are routine, but you may be searched using the following methods if there is suspicion of contraband.

Container (purse, bag, etc.)	Vehicle	Canine
Strip (if suspected of criminal activity)	Pat	Locker

If you refuse to comply with a search, you will be escorted immediately from the grounds and you will lose your visiting privilege until a review is completed.

On the Day You Visit – *Property and Dress*

You Must Have Picture Identification

Acceptable forms of identification are any ONE of these:

- Photo driver's license or state ID card (any US state/territory)
- Federal agency identification card
- Passport
- Alien Registration Receipt card
- Military picture identification card
- Tribal identification

You May Bring

Baby Supplies

- One diaper bag, which may contain two clear plastic baby bottles holding water, juice, milk, or formula;
- Six disposable diapers,
- One container of baby food in the original package and a plastic container with a lid for transferring the baby food;
- One baby blanket (not quilted),
- One extra set of baby clothes;
- One pacifier or teething ring (not liquid filled).

Medication

Visitors may bring only **prescription medication**. The medication must:

1. Be in the original pharmacy container,
2. Bear the imprinted name of the visitor,
3. Be current,
4. Have dosage instructions, and
5. Be only enough to last through the visit.

Property

- \$15.00 in one-, five-, or ten-dollar bills or silver change (no pennies, dollar or half-dollar coins). *You may bring additional money up to this limit for each authorized child with you, not to exceed \$60.00 total.*
- One clear plastic baggie or coin purse to contain the money.
- One unopened pack of cigarettes
- One umbrella
- Four keys and one key chain (no accessories, car alarms or remote entry keys)
- One wrist watch
- One wedding ring set and another ring
- One religious medallion
- Two pair of earrings
- Two bracelet
- One nose ring or stud
- One necklace

Clothing

We wish all visitors to enjoy a non-offensive, family-oriented environment, and expect visitors to dress conservatively. To speed processing and ensure safety and security, we limit the kinds of clothing a visitor may wear. ***Failure to follow these rules will result in denial of a visit.***

General Dress Guidelines

1. All clothing must be clean and in good repair. Buttons, zippers and closures must be fastened to the degree necessary to maintain modesty.
2. Sock, stockings, or pantyhose must be worn.
3. Undergarments must be worn.
4. Male visitors must wear full-length pants and sleeved shirts.
5. Female visitors must wear socially conservative, full-length pants or knee-length skirts or culottes.
6. Visitors should not wear clothing that is difficult to search (for example; numerous pockets, heavy padding, multiple layers, excessively tight clothing).

Clothing Which is Not Allowed

You may **not** wear:

- Items with holes, rip, or tears.
- Provocative, revealing or high-/low-cut clothing or clothing which reveals undergarments, cleavage, exposes the thighs, back or midriff.
- Shorts, “cut-offs.”
- Culottes or skirts shorter than two inches above the knee.
- Wrap-around skirts or dresses.
- Dresses/skirts with slits extending above the knee.
- Tank tops, sleeveless tops or shirts, halter-tops.
- Thongs (“flip-flops”), shower shoes, quilted snow/foul weather shoes/boots.
- Sheer, transparent or mesh fabrics (other than hose).
- Stirrup pants.
- Clothing with words or pictures about obscenity, alcohol, drugs, or sex.
- Camouflage clothing.
- Bibbed attire (overalls and the like).
- Money belts or compartmented belts.
- Excessive jewelry or non-searchable jewelry styles.
- Headbands or excessive hair ornamentation.

Food

Food is available for purchase from vending machines for consumption during visits. Only pre-packaged food is allowed with a written request from a medical doctor. The food cannot be shared with another. No other food products may be brought to the SCC.

On the Day You Visit – *Check In and Transportation*

Arrival

- You must arrive at the Western State Hospital depot **no earlier than 7:00am** for a day visit. For a Sunday evening visit, you must arrive **no earlier than 3:30pm**. If you arrive earlier, you may be asked to leave and return at the proper time.
- To allow time for processing, you must check in at the depot **no later than:**
8:10am for regular visiting on the 8:45 boat
9:00am for the 10:00 boat, and
4:00pm for Sunday evening visiting.

Handicapped visitors must check in no later than:

7:30 am on weekdays for the 8:30 barge

8:30 am on Saturday & Sunday for the 9:30 barge.

May I just park near the dock?

Sorry, you may not park at the Steilacoom dock.

You must check in at the depot at Western State Hospital and you must take the bus to and from there.

Stowing things

Unauthorized items (purses, keys, cameras, radios, tape recorders, cell phones, etc.) should be left at home or locked in the trunk of your vehicle. If you forget, coin-operated lockers are available at the bus depot.

Checking In (Visitor Registration)

You must completely and legibly fill out the sign-in sheet in the depot. You may not bring others with you who are not approved to visit on that day. You must provide ***proper photo identification*** (see above).

On the Bus

During transport, you must use only the front entrance door of the bus/van and you must remain seated until the driver has given permission for you to disembark.

On the Boat

- You must wait until instructed to board the boat.
- You must sit in the assigned area and remain seated until instructed to disembark.
- Passengers are not allowed to lie down on, or place their feet on the seats/benches.

Smoking

State buildings and vehicles (boats, vans, and buses) are **non-smoking**. SCC visitors may not smoke until they reach the SCC facility. Smoking by visitors is allowed in the outside visiting patio area only.

About Children

During your visit, you and the resident you visit are responsible for your children's behavior. Children must remain with their parents or guardians at all times, for their own safety and to avoid intruding on the privacy of others. Your visit will be terminated if children with you are not properly supervised.

Visiting Room Procedures

SCC staff will escort you to the visiting room. An SCC staff person supervises the visiting area and has authority to direct visitors and residents and intervene where necessary to preserve order and the rules. Visiting staff may terminate a visit if a visitor does not follow rules and instructions.

Residents are searched by metal detector before and after visits and will be body-scanned following visits. Pat searches can be done for security reasons at any time. Residents are escorted from the visiting area gate to the visiting room.

Gifts, Packages, and Food

- Visitors may not bring gifts, packages or food to residents.
- Visitors may not exchange packages, gifts, pictures, notes, computer diskettes or memory cards, or any other item with a resident.
- Food purchased from the available vending machines must be consumed in the visiting room.
- Unless previously arranged through the Visiting Supervisor, a visitor may not have papers or other documents for the resident to examine or sign.

VISITING RULES

An SCC resident may have no more than four visitors at any single visit, plus one child under the age of 3 years. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

1. **Male** residents and male visitors must be clothed in full-length pants, socks, shoes, and shirts with all buttons and zippers appropriately fastened. Shorts, as an outer garment, and tank tops are not permitted. Shoes must be worn at all times; thongs are not acceptable.
2. **Female** residents and female visitors must be clothed in a combination of full-length pants or skirts with tops, or dresses. Skirts/dresses must not be shorter than two inches above the knee. Tops with pants or skirts must be socially conservative. Provocative or suggestive clothing are not permitted. All female visitors will wear brassieres. Shoes must be worn at all times; thongs are not acceptable.
3. Residents may bring a comb, watch, wedding ring, sunglasses, cigarettes (rolled – no loose tobacco), approved medallion and handkerchief to the visiting room, and may wear a belt.
4. Residents and visitors may have in their possession an asthma inhaler and/or nitroglycerine tablets. Prescribed medications must have the resident's name on the label. All other medications must be handed to the staff for storage, prior to admission to the VR.
5. Residents must wear their SCC ID badge at all times, picture side out and fully visible on the upper left area of the outermost garment.
6. Residents will be escorted to and from the visiting area gate to the visiting room by an SCC staff person.
7. Residents and visitors must follow the directions given by staff when going to, coming from, and while in the visiting room. Residents and visitors may not wander around the visiting room to other tables. They must remain seated, except for movement to and from the vending area or restrooms.
8. Restroom use will be monitored by SCC staff.
9. Residents may interact only with their own visitors and the visiting room RRC staff.
10. Residents are permitted to embrace, kiss, and/or shake hands with their visitor only at the beginning and again at the end of the visiting period. The resident and visitor may hold hands on the top of the table, keeping both hands visible during the entire visit. The resident and visitor may not engage in necking or petting.
11. Residents are not allowed to hold children.
12. Each visitor may bring fifteen dollars in change into the visiting room for vending machine use. Visitors may share vending machine food and drink products with the resident they are visiting. Residents may not take items purchased during the visit back to the unit.
13. Residents and visitors may not exchange any items or medication.
14. Visitors are responsible for maintaining control and supervision of children brought into the visiting room.
15. Disruptive behavior may result in termination of the visit.
16. No one may place feet on the furniture.
17. Tables must be left clean. Trash must be deposited in the proper receptacles.
18. After the visit, residents must cooperate with the body scan/pat search. Residents may also be strip searched if reasonable suspicion of contraband exists.

Visiting Schedule

Times shown are the duration of the visit in the visiting room. See the check-in and transportation instructions when you must arrive to be transported to the island.

Regular Visiting

	<i>Begin</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Begin</i>	<i>End</i>
Monday	9:30am	2:00pm	<i>Evening visits are only on the first and third Sunday of each month.</i>	
Tuesday	9:30am	2:00pm		
Friday	9:30am	2:00pm		
Saturday	9:30am	2:00pm		
Sunday	9:30am	2:00pm	5:30pm	7:40pm
Holidays	9:30am	2:00pm		

Visiting for Handicapped Persons

	<i>Begin</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Begin</i>	<i>End</i>
Monday	9:30am	1:00pm	<i>Evening visits are only on the first and third Sunday of each month.</i>	
Tuesday	9:30am	1:00pm		
Friday	9:30am	1:00pm		
Saturday	10:30am	1:00pm		
Sunday	10:30am	1:00pm	5:30pm	7:40pm
Holidays	No Barge run	No ADA van		

*If a **holiday** falls on a **Wednesday** or **Thursday**, visiting will be arranged depending on staff availability and program needs. Visiting then is not guaranteed.*

Boat Schedule

To the Island from the Steilacoom Dock

8:45am

10:00am

3:30pm (for evening visits, 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month)

From the Island to Steilacoom

You have the option to depart on boats leaving at:

12:30pm *leaving the visiting room by 12:05*

1:30pm *leaving the visiting room by 1:05*

2:50pm *leaving the visiting room by 2:00*

For evening visits, 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month

8:00pm *leaving the visiting room by 7:30*

No later departure is allowed.

Special Questions

My Visitor Application Was Denied. What can I do?

An application may be denied because the applicant:

- Failed to provide all required information or documents.
- Had an outstanding “want” or warrant.
- Provided false information.
- Has been convicted of a felony.
- Is a former resident of the SCC.
- Is a current or former employee of the SCC.
- Has a restraining order, which, if the visitor were approved, might cause violation of the order.
- Is a minor and not an immediate family member, adopted child or ward of the resident.
- Is listed as a visitor for another resident.
- Has a communicable disease or other health risk.
- Has been determined to be a risk to the resident’s effective treatment.
- Was a victim of the resident.
- Other reasons which represent a risk to the SCC, its residents and staff.

You may appeal a denial by:

- Providing complete, correct information.
- Requesting a waiver.
- The request should be addressed to the Superintendent, SCC.

The Superintendent or designee may only grant exceptions.

Waivers to allow a person to switch from visiting one resident to another are not routinely approved.

I Want to Give Some Money to the Resident I Visit. What can I do?

Residents may not have money in their possession.

Each resident has a personal account. You may give money to the resident for his or her personal use by sending a money order or check (personal, cashier’s, or travel check) through the U.S. mail to:

Business Office
Special Commitment Center
PO Box 88450
Steilacoom, WA 98388

How Can I Learn More About Visiting?

You are expected to read and comply with SCC policy 220, *Resident Personal Visiting*. That policy and this Guide should answer most of your questions about rules, privileges, and procedures.

You may also call the SCC Visiting Supervisor at the number given on page 3. If you find that important information is not available in this Guide, or if it contains errors, please notify the Visiting Supervisor.

We do our best to keep all information accurate and complete.

We hope you have a most pleasant visit.